



**THE TOWN COUNCIL  
OF  
ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA**  
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ROBERT NASH ACIS DMS  
Clerk to the Town Council

23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2013

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee will be held in Meeting Room 5 at the Town Hall, Parade, Royal Leamington Spa on **MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2013 commencing at 6.30 pm.**

The business will be as set out below.

Yours faithfully,

**Clerk to the Town Council**

To:- Councillors J. Clarke, R. Copping, G. Dulay, S. Ingleby, S. Lytton, Y. Moore, Mota Singh and A. Stevens.

Mr J. Mather (Leamington International Twinning Society)

(All other Members of the Town Council – Agenda for information only)

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**AGENDA**

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members are invited to declare any interest they may have in an item identified for discussion at the Meeting.
3. **PUBLIC FORUM**  
To receive representations from Members of the public in accordance with Council Standing Orders
4. **COMMUNITY GRANT – PUSH PROJECTS**  
The Meeting will be attended by Daniel Browne of Push Projects who will provide the Committee with an appraisal of the outcome of the Push Project – support for Young Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender people. (Grant Monitoring enclosed)

5. TOWN TWINNING MATTERS

(i) Town Exchanges/work placements

To consider options for identifying potential partners for twinning exchanges and work placements. John Mather to outline further details.

(ii) Other Twinning matters

To consider other Twinning matters arising, including the recent visit of a delegation to Heemstede (Netherlands).

*Members of Leamington Twinning Society are in attendance for these items.*

6. MINUTES

To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013 (Report No. 6)

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

8. UNVEILING OF DEFIBRILLATOR – TOWN HALL

Town Clerk to report orally on the unveiling on the 24<sup>th</sup> April.

9. BLUE PLAQUES

To consider progress since the last meeting.

10. FAIRTRADE DIRECTORY AND LAUNCH EVENT

Town Clerk to report on arrangements for the launch of the Fairtrade Directory on World Fairtrade Day (11<sup>th</sup> May, 2013)

11. LEAMINGTON IN BLOOM

To consider arrangements for this year's Heart of England in Bloom Competition.

12. LEAMINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL

To note the arrangements for the Leamington Music Festival (3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> May) – letter from Festival Director enclosed.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD  
ON 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2013**

Present: Councillors J. Clarke (Chairman) R. Copping, G. Dulay, S. Ingleby, J Knight (substituting for Cllr Mota Singh), S Lytton and A. Stevens.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Y Moore and M Singh

Also present: Mr M. Crawshaw and Mr J Mather (Leamington International Twinning Society)

**45. PUBLIC FORUM**

There was one member of the public present.

**46. PRESENTATION BY CASTEL FROMA – COMMUNITY GRANT**

The meeting received a presentation from Suzie Murray, Principal Fundraiser for Castel Froma, with regard to the grant awarded by the Council for a mechanical hoist for use at the Castel Froma Care Home. The Committee was advised of the continued success of the care facilities provided by Castel Froma, both at its Lillington Road and Bericote Lane sites, following the acquisition of the former Helen Ley Centre. The community continued to benefit from the range of specialist services provided.

The Committee was advised that Castel Froma was currently preparing to develop a new centre which would result in vacating the Lillington Road site, although it was hoped that the new multi-purpose facility would continue to be within easy reach of Leamington.

Following the presentation, Miss Murray was thanked for her attendance and left the meeting.

**47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following non pecuniary interests were declared in applications to the Community Grant Fund (Minute 52):-

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Simon Lytton	LCFD 2013 Organising Group	Volunteer at Lillington Community Event 2012
Amanda Stevens	LCFD 2013 Organising Group	Member of Lillington Parish Church
Roger Copping	LCFD 2013 Organising Group	Volunteer at Lillington Community Event 2012

**48. TOWN TWINNING**

(i) Conference Proposal

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Twinning Working Group held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013 had been circulated and a copy is attached to the signed minutes of this meeting.



Mr Mather reported that there was no further update regarding the application for funding to the European Union – a decision being anticipated in June.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Bruhl Twinning Association is advised of the support of the Town Council and LITS for the celebrations connected with the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the Town Twinning Agreements;
- (ii) that Bruhl Twinning Association is advised that the Town will be unable to participate in the planned workshop activity scheduled for 4th October, 2013;
- (iii) that a party from Leamington will attend the Anniversary Twinning celebrations and associated events over the period 3rd-7th October, 2013
- (vi) that an invitation is extended to those community and voluntary groups, having previously expressed an interest in Twinning exchanges, to join the Town delegation visiting Bruhl.

(ii) **Other Twinning Matters**

Mr Mike Crawshaw announced that he was standing down from his voluntary role as the Co-ordinator for twinning exchanges with Bruhl, though he would continue as a member of LITS. The Committee was advised that there was an accepted need to build upon the foundations of community based exchanges developed by Mr Crawshaw and this would require some administrative support, including a designated person to respond to enquiries and requests for information between Leamington and groups in the Twin Towns.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the task of dealing with requests for information and liaison with groups involved in Twinning could be undertaken within existing resources at the Town Council. However, the pro-active development of new relationships was likely to be more time consuming and additional resource might be necessary.

Mr Crawshaw also outlined a request that had been received from Myton School which was anticipating a visit to the School of Art and Music at Bruhl to coincide with the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bruhl/ Leamington twinning agreement. It had been indicated that in order for a party of students from Myton to attend, some assistance with the costs of travel would be welcomed. The Committee noted that no financial provision existed within current budgets to assist individual organisations undertaking twinning exchanges.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the first point of contact for enquiries in connection with twinning matters is provided by the Town Council;
- (ii) that the Town Clerk monitors the resource implications and submits a further report to the Committee in due course;

- (iii) that Myton School is advised that no financial contribution can be made to the costs associated with travelling to Bruhl; and
- (iv) that the twinning report is noted.

The Committee thanked Mr Crawshaw for his contribution to the work of the Committee and twinning exchanges as the exchange Co-ordinator for LITS.

The representatives of LITS then left the meeting.

**49. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**50. GUIDED WALKS**

Consideration was given to a Report (Report No. 7) regarding a proposal from the Leamington History Group to undertake the role of organising future guided walks around Leamington during 2013.

**RESOLVED** to accept the offer of support from Leamington History Group to manage and deliver the guided walk programme in 2013, subject to the Town Council providing appropriate financial and administrative support.

**51. BLUE PLAQUES**

The Town Clerk circulated a report on the proposals for new blue plaques during 2013 and a copy is attached to the signed Minutes.

It was noted that the Committee's previously approved preference for a plaque to Dr John Hitchman was being progressed and, subject to the approval of the owner of the building at 31 Parade, a plaque would be erected in 2013.

**RESOLVED** that the report is noted.

**52. COMMUNITY GRANT FUND**

Consideration was given to a Report (Report No. 9) setting out applications to the Community Grant Fund. The Committee was reminded that the sum of £6,530 remained to be allocated. A file containing all the background papers to each application had been considered by Members of the Committee prior to the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that under Sections 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, being expenditure that is in the interests of the area and its inhabitants that will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure, the following grants are awarded:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>
Heritage Matters	Leamington Looks Back	£1,630
LCFD 2013 Organising Group	Lillington Community Fun Day	£500
Arts Trail	Art Trail Workshops & Mentoring Project	£0
WCVYS	Young Leaders' Residential	£900
The Chain	Lillington Arty Folk	£1,000
Leamington Netball Club	The Hub	£0
Asian Elderly Men's Club	Refurbishment of kitchen & toilets	£0
Elderly Women's Group	Community Vaisakhi Celebration with Healthy Eating & Keeping Fit Workshops	£500
ARC CIC	Creating a pond in Foundry Wood	£1,000
Heartbreak Productions	Community Workshops	£1,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,530</b>

**53. FUTURE COMMUNITY GRANT FUND TIMETABLE**

The Committee was reminded that at the last meeting consideration was given to the process and timetable for considering applications to the Community Grant Fund in 2013/14. The Committee's preference was to move to a two tranche process whereby applications could be considered twice a year instead of the present annual system. If this system were to be adopted it was suggested that the available funding is split equally between the two application cycles.

**RESOLVED** that applications for assistance under the Community Grant Fund 2013/14 are subject to closing dates during the months of August and January.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and ended at 8.30 pm.

Signed.....  
(Chairman)

Dated.....

**REPORT TO A MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 29 APRIL 2013 AT THE TOWN HALL, LEAMINGTON SPA**

**LEAMINGTON IN BLOOM**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider arrangements for this year's Heart of England in Bloom

**2. HISTORY OF THE "IN BLOOM" COMPETITION**

The National 'In Bloom' Competition began in 1963 when it was run by the British Tourist Authority. In 1983 The Tidy Britain Group took over as the Governing Body with more emphasis on the Environment and were fully involved with the Competition, along with the Royal Horticultural Society, sourcing sponsors with the aim of attracting public interest. In 2001, the Royal Horticultural Society took full control and since that date has worked to change the emphasis of the activities still further to cover Horticultural Endeavour, Community Participation and Environmental Responsibility.

Although floral displays still play an important part in the Competition, the 'Bloom' title is now, perhaps, misleading. In recent years the Competition has increasingly assessed how all sectors of the local community are managing their local environment.

There are 5 entry categories which cover: (1) Villages, (2) Towns, (3) Cities, (4) Urban Communities and (5) Coastal Areas. The first three categories are sub-divided into Small, Medium and Large and each category correlates to the number of registered electors.

For over thirty years the Town of Royal Leamington Spa has been a successful entrant in the Heart of England in Bloom Competition, winning, on many occasions, the highest accolade of a 'Gold' Award for its manicured lawns, vibrant flowerbeds, majestic trees and magnificent buildings.

**The Organisation**

For many years Warwick District Council played a major part in Leamington's entry in the Annual Competition working closely with the Leamington in Bloom Committee, providing funding and direction. However, financial cutbacks and reductions in resources over recent years have tended to reduce the involvement of officers and contractors.

As a consequence the Annual Campaign is now spearheaded by the Leamington in Bloom Committee who are, in the main, local volunteers representing horticultural clubs, community and resident groups and individual keen gardeners and the Campaign is supported and funded by the Town Council. The Town Clerk is the Treasurer and Secretarial support is provided by the Town Council's Admin officers. The Town Council also has a representative on the Committee – currently Councillor Simon Lytton.

Officers from Warwick District Council, the BID Manager and the Town Centre Manager are adhoc members of the Committee and are invited to attend the Committee's regular meetings, although their attendance and involvement is at best spasmodic.

Funding for local activities, such as the Geranium Train, printing and supplies is provided by the Town Council on an annual basis with a significant contribution to Warwick District Council to subsidise Hanging Baskets in the Town Centre. The total Town Council expenditure on this initiative in 2012/13 was £7100 of which £4830 was paid to Warwick

District Council. The Leamington BID, on behalf of the local businesses, also subsidises planting within the Town Centre, contributing significantly to the hanging basket scheme.

Warwick District Council and its Contractors provide the technical expertise and resources for planting in the parks and gardens and other public areas, grass cutting, recycling facilities and litter collection.

The Town has, in the past, entered the Competition in the 'Large Town' Category, which correlates to a range of registered electors from 12001-35000 electors. An increase in the number of registered electors, recorded at the last count in November 2012 at 35,071, has pushed Leamington into the Small City category for this year's Competition.

However the Town has received a special dispensation from the Heart of England in Bloom organisers this year which will allow it to remain in the Large Town category for 2013. This is because the judging date of 11<sup>th</sup> July had already been agreed at the start of 2013 and the Committee, unaware of the increase in the number of registered electors until recently, had already arranged its programme for this current year.

Consideration will need to be given as to the effect of moving up a category in 2014 in terms of resources and funding. Certainly the current level of volunteers and Town Council support may prove insufficient to sustain an entry in the 2014 Campaign, given the need to compete with designated small cities such as Shrewsbury.

### **3. INVOLVEMENT IN THE ANNUAL IN BLOOM CAMPAIGN**

Each spring, 24 local primary schools get involved with the growing on of some 1200 Geranium plugs for planting in two attractively decorated wooden trains. When planted up in June, one train sits in a prime spot in Jephson Gardens and the other at the Railway Station in full view of passengers both on the platforms and those passing through. This project gives local children an opportunity to learn about growing plants and an important introduction to gardening, many of whom would not otherwise have such an opportunity.

This year's official launch of the 2013 campaign took place on 6 April in Royal Priors Shopping Mall. Free packets of salad seeds were given away to local residents to encourage them to 'grow something green for twenty-thirteen' (the National Campaign this year is 'Edible Gardening') The object of the launch was to not only to advertise the Town's In Bloom Campaign but to attract local residents to volunteer to join the Committee and to offer their services to help local Community Groups to develop gardening skills.

The launch was also the showcase for the Town's Domestic Garden Competition which is open to local residents to show off their Gardens. Around 100 entries are received each year and it is hoped to encourage more residents to take part. Entries this year have to be sent to the Town Council by 10 June and judging will take place from 8<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July. Participants are rewarded for their efforts at the annual Awards Ceremony which takes place towards the end of September.

Committee Members work with and encourage local Community Groups to develop projects. Such Groups include GALS – Gardening around Leamington Spa – who identify public spaces in and around the Town and improve them with Planting. They have been particularly instrumental in transforming the Dell. The Sydri Centre has received support for its Community Garden as has the new Community Woodland (Foundry Wood) on the old Ford site.

Local schools are encouraged to take part in the Geranium Train project and to develop their own school gardens. Champion School has many horticultural projects on going including a



nature reserve and mini allotment to encourage children to grow their own food and to protect wildlife.

In addition to Community involvement, Sustainability is important. The move to sustainable planting of beds and roundabouts by Warwick District Council has been a great success and it is hoped more will follow depending on resources and funding. The Committee is looking at ways it can help to extend such projects. There is also great emphasis on litter collection and recycling.

The Committee does have difficulty in persuading Warwick District Council to let them set up gardening projects on municipal land. Concerns expressed by WDC cover health and safety, public liability and long-term maintenance of cultivated areas. These concerns are recognised but by working in partnership they could be overcome. Active joint working and local partnerships need further development but again it is resource dependent.

Around the middle of July two Judges representing Heart of England in Bloom visit the town. The Chair of the In Bloom Committee – Enid Simms –takes them on a pre-determined tour to show off the Town's best horticultural features, the work of local Community Groups, sustainable planting projects, recycling facilities, allotments and to meet local People involved in the many activities that may go unnoticed.

Last year the Judges said this about the Town:

“The Committee are working extremely hard to get sections of the community actively involved in Bloom. The new sustainable planting along the Parade works well alongside the well planned seasonal bedding. The entry is underpinned by the volunteers from the most floral train station in Britain, the award winning GALS at the Dell through to the nature project at Champion School. Heritage is well highlighted and the restoration of the Linden Arches is a gem. The tour took in the lovely tree lined avenues and concluded at the Jewel in the Crown the Jephson Gardens.”

The Town won a 'Gold Award' which reflected well on the involvement of so many local residents, groups and organisations. Each year, though, it becomes more difficult to improve on the previous year's excellence.

#### **4. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION**

Leamington in Bloom has been successful in:

Persuading and supporting local residents, community groups, schools and individuals to take an interest in gardening, sustainability and protecting their local environment;

Bringing Communities together in a common interest, helping reduce crime and anti-social behaviour by fostering a greater respect for and a sense of ownership of local spaces.

Encouraging inward investment by making areas better places to be so local residents stay and visitors are attracted to spend time there. It attracts business support. An improved environment brings more customers and revenue, less graffiti and vandalism.

One area where the Town under achieves is in terms of advertising its success. In other Towns around the Country, winning a category within the In Bloom Competition has proved

to be a source of considerable civic pride and many advertise their achievements on signs placed strategically on major routes into their villages, towns and cities.

Press Coverage is often limited since local news tends to concentrate on the negative side of life in Leamington rather than the positive. A reporter on the local paper last year, when told that the Town had won a Gold Award, said 'that's not news you always win gold!

The challenge of moving up to the small city category will certainly place a greater burden on the current number of volunteers on the Leamington in Bloom Committee, require additional funding (if support is to be given to local Groups, schools etc to develop necessary skills) and administrative support for improved publicity.

The Committee is invited to consider the issues raised in this Report and consider a position statement in terms of the Town Council's future administrative and financial support for the Leamington in Bloom entry.